ECE Highlights

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE No. 30 February 1997

Editorial

UN/ECE—an instrument for facilitating good-neighbourly relations and integration

Article 1 of the Charter sets out four guiding principles for the United Nations: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to achieve international cooperation and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

UN/ECE contributes in a modest but concrete way to these objectives. Its actions are based on the belief that people who have been or are caught up in conflict and have different ideological and political interests can nevertheless cooperate and find solutions to technical problems which benefit all parties without compromising their own political beliefs.

It is in this spirit that UN/ECE has responded to the request of the countries of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) by providing assistance in developing common projects that at one and the same time facilitate transboundary relations and the integration of these countries within Europe.

The idea behind this initiative, which was launched by the United States, is that in order to re-establish durable peace in south-east Europe, it is indispensable that the concerned populations learn to live and work together once again by trading goods and services, by opening their borders and helping one another to heal the wounds of war.

UN/ECE is well placed to provide support to the SECI initiative because it has developed a vast array of instruments to foster good neighbourliness and cooperation. These instruments are well known. They range from the facilitation of trade thanks to UN/EDIFACT, numerous environmental conventions, and the standardization of agriculture products to the TIR Convention as well as many others. In parallel to responding to the countries of south-east Europe, at the request of Kazakstan, ECE, in cooperation with ESCAP, is now preparing a similar set of activities for strengthening cooperative economic relations between countries of Central Asia and their closer integration into the economies of Europe and Asia.

Yves BERTHELOT
Executive Secretary of UN/ECE

If UN/ECE did not exist it would have to be invented

Interview with Ambassador Richard Schifter, Special Advisor to the President of the United States, in charge of the Southeast European–Cooperative Initiative (SECI). SECI has asked the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) to provide technical assistance to help it carry out its tasks.

ECE Highlights: ***What is SECI?***

Ambassador Richard Schifter: The Southeast European Cooperative Initiative, which has just been launched, brings together all the countries of south-east Europe, except at this point the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which is not participating because of the present situation. The idea is that all countries of that region come together and work together on economic and environmental matters that affect them all.

Why SECI?

There are essentially two reasons. The first is that this is an area where there is much political instability. We want to overcome that by having the countries of the region begin to work with each other on matters which would not be a zero-sum game. In other words, if they come together and work together, it would be to everybody's advantage, because by working together they would be able to raise the standard of living of all in the region. The second reason is that we are dealing with

relatively small States. If each one remains on its own, it will be relatively difficult for them to achieve the kind of progress that would be possible if they come together, and work with each other to try and improve the lot of each one. This is particularly important for the private sector. Very often the private sector is not interested in investing in small countries. If SECI becomes what we call a "one stop shop", we will have a region with 150 million people, which will be much more attractive to private-sector investment.

Is SECI a follow-up to the Dayton agreement?

It is not a follow-up, but there are obvious links. The United States did become involved in the region by sending troops there, but only for a limited period of time: another year and a half and that's it. In the long run, we feel that SECI could make a concrete contribution to lasting stability in the region.

How much money is the United States willing to put in this project?

We have made it very clear from the outset that the amount of money we are going to put in SECI will be very small. Our taxpayers are not prepared to spend a lot of money on foreign assistance. At the same time, I also believe that just pouring money into that region is not going to solve its problems. If we really want to solve problems, we have to launch a self-help programme. We can engage in a certain amount of transfer of know-how, but at the end of the day if the private sector is not going to pick up, the region as a whole is not going to benefit from a small project here and there. In any case if we compare the needs of the countries of the region with the sums that could be raised, it would still be largely insufficient. The whole idea of this initiative is to make the entire region much more attractive to the private sector. And this is where the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) comes in.

Do you think that SECI could set an example for solving instability in other regions of the world?

Yes, of course! Just think of the European Union, for instance. It all started with the Coal and Steel Community 35 years ago. In its original objectives it was very limited but it has grown and become more ambitious. Now it is an important factor not only of economic improvement but also in terms of peace and stability.

Why did SECI ask the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) to provide technical assistance?

Because I discovered that this is the place where the relevant know-how is. We had some idea at the outset as to what SECI ought to be doing. As we were looking at how we were going to put it all together, we discovered that much of what SECI could be doing was in a way on UN/ECE's agenda. What was needed was the political push behind it. We were able to marry the competence of UN/ECE with the political push of SECI.

What would be the role of UN/ECE in the SECI context?

The bulk of the professional work would be done by UN/ECE staff. UN/ECE has long been engaged in such issues as the cross-border transportation of goods or the environment. Its work is extremely well done and will be translated into real achievements through SECI.

What do you think of the work of UN/ECE?

Very impressive! I have become familiar with its work over the past six months, I have read about it and met here with the staff, and I am convinced that for the purposes of SECI, if UN/ECE did not exist it would have to be invented.

Over the past years the United States Government has, on several occasions, expressed the view that UN/ECE was not useful. Does this mean that your Government has changed its mind?

As part of the UN reform we have looked at the Economic Commission for Europe and we have found that UN/ECE has made a genuine effort to adapt. We are supportive of ECE's current reform effort. Now what is needed is a political programme to enhance this reform. These two things together—the Commission's new approach and the political impulse—will make it possible to implement UN/ECE recommendations.❑

NEWS IN BRIEF

Poverty in the ECE Region: Older Persons at Risk?

Have improvements in pension policies and living arrangements substantially eliminated poverty among older persons in the ECE region? Or is poverty among older persons a persistent problem accentuated by new social and economic forces? If poverty is a problem, which groups within the older population are particularly at risk, in North America, in western Europe and in the countries in transition in central and eastern Europe?

These and other questions were discussed by leading policy makers, researchers and practitioners during a two-day workshop on social protection, poverty and older persons at risk in November 1996. The Workshop was co-organized by UN/ECE and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in the framework of the activities marking 1996 as the International Year of the Eradication of Poverty. It also served as a significant contribution to the preparation for the 1999 International Year of Older Persons. Participants at the workshop provided information on the latest methodologies for measuring poverty and how to render them comparable in the European region. Specific groups within the older population which are generally regarded to be at risk were examined, such as single older women and the very old—those over 80. According to 1993 data provided by AARP, only 13 per cent of all people aged 65 and over in the United States are poor. Of that group, however,

71 per cent are women. Among older women, black and Hispanic women and those living alone, are especially vulnerable to living in poverty. The situation among older women in central and eastern Europe is particularly serious, both as a result of the difficulties caused by the transition to a market economy and because of population imbalances. In Russia, for example, women outnumber men in the ages over 70 years by 3.5 to 1. Failing health or one of the chronic diseases associated with ageing may be another factor which determines whether older persons are likely to become poor and to need assistance from the State. One of the principal exchanges among the international experts focused on ways to create an enabling environment for the improvement of the well-being of older persons. Social insurance and other income support policies, which contribute to the economic security of older persons were scrutinized to find ways to keep these systems financially sound in spite of the growing numbers of older persons.❑

A New Centre for EDIFACT

One of the key activities of UN/ECE is trade facilitation. Over the years, ECE has developed a comprehensive international standard for electronic data interchange known as UN/EDIFACT (United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport). The success of the work undertaken under the auspices of UN/ECE and the global reach of its achievements have attracted the participation of non-ECE countries and non-governmental organizations from the private sector in the meetings and work of the UN/ECE Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures—known as WP.4. In order to accommodate the participation by non-ECE member countries, WP.4 has decided to restructure the Working Party into a Centre for Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport (CEFACT). The new Centre will recognize the fact that trade facilitation has evolved and become intersectoral to include facilitation techniques being developed and used in sectors other than trade, such as social administration and health care. In addition, trade facilitation techniques such as UN/EDIFACT are being implemented in all regions of the world giving the work a truly global reach.❑

Tackling Air Pollution from Lawnmowers to Jumbo Jets

The world's current fleet of 400,000 aircraft is responsible for 2 or 3 per cent of our planet's air pollution. This share may possibly double or triple by the year 2015. The combustion of aviation fuels gives off carbon dioxide (CO_2), water (H_20) in the form of vapour and sulphur dioxide (SO_2). It also generates a number of other pollutants, such as carbon monoxide (CO_2), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx). This growing problem was addressed by the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution at its fourteenth session in November 1996.

The Protocols to the UN/ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution already recommend specific technologies to control the emissions from traffic, but until now these recommendations have dealt almost exclusively with road vehicles, such as cars, mopeds, and lorries. Now the Executive Body for the Convention is increasingly turning its attention to other sources of emissions, such as tractors, construction equipment, lawnmowers, ships and aircraft. To cut emissions the Executive Body is proposing measures to make engines less polluting and has decided to amend some technical annexes to its NOx and VOC Protocols. These will in future recommend specific technical solutions to reduce emissions from mobile sources such as off-road vehicles, ships and aircraft.❑

Persistent Organic Pollutants: A Decisive Step

Recent scientific discoveries concerning the effects of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) on human health are particularly worrying. POPs fall into three categories: industrial chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs, by-products or contaminants such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or PAHs, and pesticides such as DDT. Very high concentrations of these substances have long been associated with a number of carcinogenic and other health effects.

As POPs are semi-volatile, they can move long distances in the atmosphere before deposition. They also "bioaccumulate", which means that their concentrations increase in fatty issues and therefore gradually build up in the food chain. For example, PCBs or DDT deposited into a lake will accumulate in the fatty issues of plankton

living in the lake. Fish feeding on the plankton will further concentrate the PCBs or DDT. This process will be repeated in fish-eating birds, mammals and humans.

The current negotiations under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution are therefore relevant as they are moving forward with a protocol on persistent organic pollutants which might be finalized in early 1998. To date a two-stage process has been followed. First an ad hoc Preparatory Working Group, operating as a "non-negotiating forum", drafted a negotiating text for the protocol which includes basic obligations, procedures for modifying the list of substances, and technical annexes. It is proposed that the basic obligations should be applied to an initial list of 16 to 18 substances which have already been identified according to certain criteria and the availability of information on their risk. The draft protocol has been designed to stand the test of time by incorporating the ability to modify the list of substances and the actions taken without making it necessary to renegotiate the entire protocol. The second stage began at the end of January 1996 when the Parties to the Convention began formal negotiations within the Working Group on Strategies. General agreement was reached among the negotiators on 15 POPs which may be included in the draft protocol. These negotiations are scheduled to continue into the autumn of this year.❑

Georgia Forges Transport Links with Neighbours

"The economic development of countries in transition depends on efficient and safe systems of communication. With Georgia recently joining the TEM and TER projects, twelve countries will have access in the near future to a modern road and rail infrastructure. The common idea behind these two projects is that a regional approach at the pan-European level is indispensable to develop efficient transport," stresses Mrs. Armangil of UN/ECE.

The project TEM (Trans-European North-South Motorway)—in which Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey take part—aims to create a regional network of modern motorways which will link the Baltic, Adriatic, Aegean and Black Seas. In total, more than 16,000 kilometres of roads are affected by this project. The intergovernmental cooperation within the TEM project, promoted by UN/ECE, was established in 1977 and has undergone several transformations both in its concept and in its aims. Currently, the objectives of this cooperation are to generate the financial capacity necessary to modernize or build a motorway network in central and eastern Europe. It also aims to integrate this network into a pan-European network, which should allow for the transport of people and goods throughout Europe.

One of the major goals of the TER project (Trans-European Railway) is to find the financing necessary to upgrade the existing railroad network, which in many instances does not meet the norms established under the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC), also developed under UN/ECE auspices. Unlike the TEM project, which will involve some construction to fill in the gaps in the network, TER will mainly modernize the existing one. This project covers a total of 20,000 kilometres of railroads and the participating countries include Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.❑

Finance for Trade in Central and Eastern Europe

More than 90 senior bankers and financial experts from some of Europe's top export-financing agencies met in Geneva from 28-29 October 1996 to explore new ways of supporting trade finance for central and eastern Europe. The meeting was organized by UN/ECE and the International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO (ITC)) with the participation of the Berne Union and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Participants reviewed trade finance needs in the region, existing programmes and recent developments on trade-finance. In this connection, EBRD's trade-financing programme and its new risk-sharing scheme with local export credit agencies and the EU's multi-country trade development programme for central and eastern Europe were also presented. A number of priority actions to facilitate export development were identified. One of them is the improvement of the export finance system, including adequate pre- and post-shipment short-term financing. The meeting made numerous recommendations to enhance regional cooperation for export finance ranging from pre-shipment/working capital guarantee schemes and setting up databases on credit information and risk assessment to regional training schemes and research and information sharing on the privatization of short-term export credit insurance.❑

Privatization of the Coal Industry in Eastern Europe leads to Massive Job Cuts

A Round Table on "Should the Coal Industry in Countries in Transition be Privatized?" took place in Geneva in November 1996 in conjunction with the annual session of the ECE Working Party on Coal. Coal industry specialists speaking at the Round Table agreed that privatization was the best way to create a viable and efficient coal industry in spite of the dramatic social problems resulting from the process. The figures speak for themselves:

Between 1990 and 1996

Bulgaria	4 mines closed, 2,000 jobs lost
Czech Republic	15 mines closed, 60,000 jobs lost
Hungary	20 mines closed, 20,000 jobs lost
Poland	9 mines closed, 13 under liquidation, a total of 150,000 jobs lost
Romania	12 mines closed, 60,000 jobs lost
Russian Federation	37 mines closed, 147,000 jobs lost
Slovenia	3 mines closed, 2,000 jobs lost

By the year 2000 it is expected that 376,000 to 400,000 additional jobs will have been cut in central and eastern Europe.

The western European panellists pointed out that the restructuring of the western European coal industry, too, was a painful process which could not be carried out without hardship despite the generous financial aid from national governments and the European Union to mitigate the social consequences. The speakers concluded that each country needed to carry out coal industry privatization according to its own specific circumstances and aims. The process must be carried by consensus among all partners, i.e. the policy makers, the coal industry and the miners. It was agreed that there were no "models" of privatization but the experiences gained in several countries could nevertheless be useful for the countries of central and eastern Europe in designing their coal industry restructuring and privatization strategies. One proposed means of preparing the coal industry for privatization was to create groups of coalmines according to their prospects of profitability.❑

The Coal Situation in the ECE Region in 1995/1996 and the Global Prospects for Coal

The restructuring of the coal industry in western and eastern Europe has gained momentum as governments have begun to reduce or remove coal industry subsidies. This process will eventually lead to a further decrease in production and employment in this industrial sector. In its survey of the coal situation in the ECE region in 1995/1996, UN/ECE observes that in 1996 the fall of coal production and consumption in Europe has come to a temporary halt. In the long run, up to the year 2010, coal production and demand in the countries of the former Soviet Union are expected to increase due to the economic recovery, while in western Europe a continuation of the downward trend is forecast owing to rising energy efficiency and ecological control measures. According to the survey, the decline of the coal production in Europe, which has accelerated since 1990, continued through 1995. The reason for the decline is that European coals, which are predominantly mined underground and under difficult geological conditions, are currently not competitive with coals from overseas. By the year 2000, the Asia-Pacific region is expected to be the major coal growth market in the world. Growing global import demand will be met chiefly by exporters from this region. Australia is expected to remain the world's top coal-exporting country.

Concerns about climate change challenging coal

The UN/ECE survey states that the commitment of an increasing number of countries worldwide to improving environment and climate protection is expected to challenge the use of coal in all parts of the world. It points out that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be a driving force for coal substitution in countries which can afford to reduce and phase out coal production and coal use. Now that clean coal technologies are available to restrict the harmful impact of coal production and use, their early application will be essential for establishing a role for coal in sustainable energy development. UN/ECE has recently launched a Clean Coal Implementation Programme to promote clean coal technology use in its member countries.❑

World Crude Steel Production Decreases by 0.2 per cent in 1996

Estimates of world crude steel production in 1996, prepared by the ECE Working Party on Steel, indicate that world crude steel production reached 750.8 Mt in 1996, a slight decrease of 0.2 per cent or 1.2 Mt compared to 1995. This overall decline is attributed mainly to stock reductions and weakening economic activity in the European Union countries and Japan. The Asian countries, with the exception of Japan, showed dynamic growth in steel production. India, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China saw output increase markedly, posting rises of 8.5 per cent, 6.1 per cent and 10.1 per cent respectively, as a result of new capacity installations. In China, crude steel production exceeded the level of 100 Mt. for the first time. The United States of America showed marginal gains in steel production from 93.6 Mt. to 94.4 Mt. This was due to sustainable economic growth with low inflation and modest interest rates. The start-up of a few mini-mills for flat products in 1996 contributed to the overall increase in crude steel production. In Latin America, crude steel production registered an increase of 4.3 per cent as a whole.

The country ranking for global crude steel production in 1996 showed that China became the largest steel producer for the first time, the only country to exceed the 100 Mt. level. Japan slipping from 101.6 Mt in 1995 to 98.8 Mt. in 1996, lagged behind China. Third was the United States, then Russia, Germany and the Republic of Korea.❑

Eastern European Countries: The Road to EU Accession—Policy Issues and the Need for a Strategy

The recently published *Economic Bulletin for Europe* presents timely economic data and forecasts for the whole of the UN/ECE region. It discusses key issues surrounding the enlargement of the European Union to the transition economies, including the need for a coherent pre-accession strategy. The *Bulletin* further analyses the evolution since 1989 of trade among the European transition countries, examines several policy options for strengthening these links as well as the external financial positions of these economies and their integration into the international capital markets.

The *Bulletin* argues that many of the expected benefits of European Union membership for eastern European countries could be achieved if policy makers put in place a comprehensive and consistent pre-accession strategy designed to enable the transition economies to meet the essential components of the *acquis communautaire*. The *Bulletin* points out that, although some of the elements of such a strategy already exist in the Europe agreements, for example the EU's assistance programmes such as PHARE and the White Paper of mid-1995, they do not amount to a fully-fledged pre-accession strategy. However, by working in a more strategic manner towards enlargement it should be possible to reduce or attenuate some of the costs of adjustment and anticipate many of the benefits of membership by strengthening both policy credibility and the expectations of economic agents especially investors and entrepreneurs, in both the transition economies and western Europe. According to the *Bulletin*, without a coherent, detailed and transparent strategy in place, the question of the actual date of accession would be settled more or less automatically by successful compliance with all the sequential stages of the programme, rather than by fixing a precise date without careful consideration of the practical problems and without allowing for unforeseen events.

Economic Bulletin for Europe, Volume 48 (1996), Sales No. E.96.II.E.29, US$ 60.00.❑

How to Become an Entrepreneur

A guide for the countries in transition

The development of entrepreneurship is a pressing issue in the countries in transition (CITs). The change from a centralized economy to a market economy has brought about decentralized decision-making concerning financial matters. The lack of skills in entrepreneurship and the understanding of the aims of an enterprise are a major problem in CITs. One important element of business know-how is lacking, namely how to present an investment plan. Consequently, enterprises in CITs often need advice. To fulfil this need, UN/ECE has developed a guide entitled: ***How to Prepare a Business Plan: a guide for start-ups and advanced private enterprises in countries in transition***. The purpose of the guide is to assist private enterprises in CITs by describing how a business plan can help in (i) obtaining credit, (ii) gaining a better understanding of the business and (iii) embarking on an investment project. The UN/ECE guide, *IND/AC.3/2*, is available in English and Russian.❑

Prague and Budapest Attract Foreigners

International Migration Bulletin—No. 9

The number of foreigners residing in the capitals of the countries in transition in central Europe has increased dramatically in recent years according to the latest issue of the ECE *International Migration Bulletin*. By 1995, approximately 9-11 per cent of the foreign population in Prague and 4-6 per cent of Budapest's population were foreigners, whereas their proportion in 1989 was negligible. These are mainly central and eastern European migrants conducting unskilled labour-intensive work and relatively young professionals from North America and western Europe.

In addition to the 53,000 foreigners residing in Prague legally at the end of 1995, it is estimated that the undocumented number included 20,000 Chinese; 20,000 Ukrainians; 20,000-30,000 North Americans; 5,000-10,000 west Europeans; and 10,000 transit migrants. Chinese immigrants are generally employed in the growing restaurant trade; Ukrainian workers are concentrated as unskilled labourers in construction and industry, and Vietnamese migrants tend to be market traders who sell clothing and electronics outside large department stores or in commuter belts. The western migrant flow consists of North Americans, most of them young, who come to work as consultants, lecturers, teachers of English, businessmen or staff of foreign companies. Estimates of the total number of foreigners, including those that are registered, amount to some 120,000-150,000. Estimates of undocumented foreigners in Budapest range from 40,000 to 100,000 and the total number of immigrants in 1995, which includes legal foreign residents, has been as high as 150,000.

This issue of the *Bulletin* reports on a array of important trends and topics in international migration, such as the refugee situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the decline in the number of asylum seekers in western Europe and North America in 1996, the new countries of immigration and the Mediterranean Conference On Population, Migration and Development.

International Migration Bulletin, No. 9, GE.96.25095. The *Bulletin* is published twice a year by the Population Activities Unit (PAU) of UN/ECE.❑

UN/ECE Promotes Energy Efficiency Investments in the Russian Federation

Russian experts estimate that up to 40 per cent of their current national energy use is wasted. To fight against this waste, important new legislation has been passed in the Russian Federation to enhance energy efficiency. New policy measures and the financing methods they have created are described for investors by the UN/ECE Energy Efficiency Project in new guidelines that, together with the UN/ECE *Manual on Business Planning*, will provide assistance in preparing loan projects in the Russian Federation.

These guidelines will provide foreign investors with important new information on recently developed financing mechanisms, investment guarantees, Council of Ministers' decisions, and laws and regulations governing energy efficiency investments in the Russian Federation. The Guide for Investors in Energy Efficiency Projects in the Russian Federation was prepared by an international Steering Committee of governments, commercial companies and banks under the chairmanship of Vice-Minister Vitaly Bushuev, Ministry of Fuel and Energy of the Russian Federation. The guidelines should reduce costs for investors by providing information needed for the due diligence of investment projects together with two worked examples of how new financing mechanisms would be applied in the Russian market.❑

WHERE TO ORDER

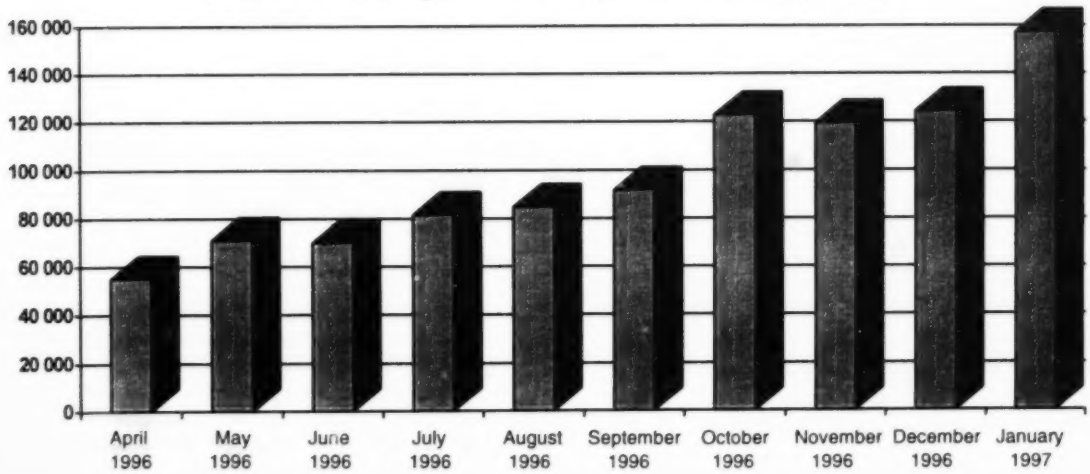
The publications listed with sales prices may be ordered from: **United Nations Bookshop, Sales Unit, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland** and a number of bookstores in the ECE region. Send cheque or money order in US $ made payable to: UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS.

Those publications listed without a sales price may be obtained from the Information Officer, Economic Commission for Europe, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

ECE HOME PAGE A GREAT SUCCESS

In less than one year the consultation of the UN/ECE home page on Internet has almost tripled. In April last year it registered around 1,800 per day. It reached 5,070 per day in January 1997. This represents almost one tick every 15 seconds 24 hours a day. Only last month the audience increased by 26% as compared to December.

Evolution of UN/ECE Home page consultation
(Number of ticks per month—April 1996-January 1997)



Access ECE through the Internet

Information about UN/ECE—including all press releases and special interviews—, can be obtained by consulting our Internet Website on: www.unicc.org/unece

ECE to Celebrate its 50th Anniversary at a Jubilee Session

The Economic Commission for Europe will be holding its Jubilee Session during the period 21-24 April 1997. On this occasion it will meet at the ministerial level to celebrate the Commission's past, present and redefined future and to adopt a Declaration on the strengthening of economic cooperation in Europe. This Declaration and accompanying Plan of Action, which conclude an important effort at reform, will highlight the strategic directions to be adopted by the Commission in order to facilitate and strengthen the involvement of all member countries in harmonious and efficient economic relations.

The first day and a half of the Jubilee Session, Monday, 21 April, in the afternoon and Tuesday morning, 22 April, will constitute the high-level segment. It will include opening addresses by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and ministers. Two high-level Round-Table discussions are planned for the event. One of them on "The Economic Commission for Europe Forging Partnerships between Governments, Enterprises and Non-Governmental Organizations" will bring together representatives from public service, the business community and organizations within civil society who are involved in ECE activities and users of its products. The discussion will offer an opportunity for participants to illustrate how ECE activities and concrete achievements respond to their needs and facilitate cooperation among them. The discussion will also focus on how ECE could further facilitate and develop such partnerships in the future. Events planned in conjunction with the session include an essay competition for students and the installation of computers around the meeting rooms for delegations to access ECE's home page on the Internet.

ECE CALENDAR 1997

Selected Events

February

10-12 Preparatory Committee of the Regional Conference on Transport and Environment

17-21 Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics

18-21 Working Party on Electronic Data Processing

24-28 Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport

27-28 Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians

March

3-6 Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses

3-7 Meeting of Experts on Standardization of Meat

10-12 Meeting of Experts on Research, Management and Transition in the Coal Industry (Oporto, Portugal)

10-14 Meeting of the Signatories to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

11-14 Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles

17-21 Joint Meeting of the RID Safety Committee and the ECE Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (Berne, Switzerland)

17-21 Working Party on the Facilitation of International Procedures

24-26 Preparatory Committee of the Regional Conference on Transport and Environment

April

7-11 Working Party on Road Traffic Safety

17-18 Working Party on Combined Transport

21-24 FIFTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

28-30 Working Party on Electric Power

28-29 Seminar on Statistical Nomenclatures

28-30 Meeting of Experts on Problem Areas in the Historic Centres of the Mediterranean and Sustainable Development (Greece, followed by a Study Tour in Egypt, 30 April-4 May)

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